

**DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES  
PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE  
INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE**

**Refer to: Clinical Quality**

**ALBUQUERQUE AREA INDIAN HEALTH SERVICE CIRCULAR NO. 2006-02**

**ALBUQUERQUE AREA QUALITY ASSURANCE TEAM PROTOCOL**

Sec.

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- 1 **PURPOSE**: The purpose of this policy is to establish the protocol and procedures for organizing and conducting the Albuquerque Area Quality Assurance Team's (AAQAT) visits to Service Unit locations within the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service (AAIHS).

The purpose of the annual AAQAT reviews is to allow the senior administrators at the Service Unit location and Area Office to have a management tool to efficiently identify important issues and areas of concern which impact the delivery of quality patient care. Issues on the review instrument are areas that the AAIHS management must address to maintain the smooth and efficient operation of their department or facility for the optimum delivery of care to their patients.

2. **REFERENCES**: None.

- 3 **POLICY**: It shall be the policy of the AAIHS to have annual Service Unit visits by the AAQAT. Visits will be scheduled the first and second quarter of the fiscal year. Albuquerque Area Office divisions will be reviewed as needed or annually. Reports will be sent to the AAIHS Area Office and to the Service Unit senior administration for follow-up.

The AAIHS Area Director and the Chief Executive Officer will ensure supervisors and division directors are available to meet with the AAQAT. Top management officials and division directors in the Area Office and Service Unit will ensure all staff is informed and accountable for adhering to procedures and guidelines described in this issuance.

**4. DEFINITIONS:**

**Senior Administration:** Refers to the high-level management officials (Area Director, Chief Medical Officer and Executive Officer) and Division Directors in the Albuquerque Area Office and all AAIHS facility Chief Executive Officers (CEO) or his/her designee.

**Employees:** Generic term for all individuals who perform work or provide services at an AAIHS facility, regardless of whether the work/service is compensated or uncompensated.

**Supervisor:** First line supervisor or immediate supervisor who is responsible for attendance, performance, and conduct issues of subordinate staff, as well as front-line service to customers.

**5. RESPONSIBILITIES:**

- Area Director;
- CEOs, high level management officials and division directors;
- Employees.

**6. PROCEDURES:**

AAIHS Area Director will appoint the team members. Team members are selected based on areas of expertise. Team members may be from the Area office or Service Unit.

2. AAIHS Area Director will appoint the AAQAT Chairperson. The Chairperson will have served at least one year on the Team as a committee member in the previous year.
3. Team Chairperson will update the AAQAT review instrument. Input will be solicited from AAIHS management, staff and committee members.

**4. SERVICE UNIT PREPARATION:**

- a. AAQAT chairperson will arrange site visit date with each respective Service Unit CEO.
- b. Service Unit staff will have documents for specific sections available, e.g., Plan for Improvement, JCAHO, AAAHC, By-Laws, Policy and Procedure Manuals for each department, and other documents as requested. Documents will be available prior to the review, if requested.\*
- c. The Team will request files for random audits on site, same day.\*
- d. A work area is required for the Team.
- e. The QA Risk Manager will be “on-call” during the review.
- f. All Department Directors will be “on-call” during the review.

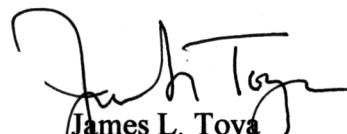
**5. AREA PREPARATION:**

- a. Team member will request Area status reports/audits for assigned sections from Service Unit and/or Area Staff.\*

- b. Team member will contact Service Unit staff responsible for assigned section.
  - i. Arrange appointment for interviews.
  - ii. Gather needed documents for review prior to interview.
- 6. **ENTRANCE INTERVIEW (15 Minutes):**
  - a. Introduction of Survey Team;
  - b. Introduction of Service Unit staff;
  - c. Protocol:
    - i. Service Unit staff to be interviewed.\*
    - ii. Area/Service Unit reports to be used.\*
    - iii. Area report/audits to be checked.\*
    - iv. Review instrument discussion.\*\*
  - d. Questions/Comments.
- 7. **TEAM MEETING (60 Minutes):**
  - a. One (1) hour prior to exit interview, Team members will have time to prepare preliminary comments.
- 8. **EXIT INTERVIEW (60 Minutes):**
  - a. Each Team member will report sections covered.
    - i. Review and comment on all scores 1, 2, and 3 from review instrument.
    - ii. Discuss all recommendations.
- 9. **REPORTS:**
  - Reports will be distributed to AAIHS Area Office and Service Unit administrative staff.
    - a. Each AAQAT Team member is responsible for preparing a bullet style narrative of the areas surveyed.
    - b. Each Team member will provide comments and recommendation for scores 2 and 3.
    - c. The Team Chairperson will compile one (1) report.

(\*Document II and \*\*Document III are on file with AAQAT Team Chairperson)

- 7. **USE OF INFORMATION:** The information gathered will be used as a management tool by the AAIHS Service Units and Area Office to improve the delivery of quality health care to IHS beneficiaries.
- 8. **SUPERSEDES:** None.
- 9. **EFFECTIVE DATE:** This circular is effective upon date of signature and shall remain in effect until canceled or superseded.



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Director

Albuquerque Area Indian Health Service